

The seven hundred and seventy-first Meeting of the Club was held in the South Side Suite, Imperial College, Prince's Gardens, London, S.W.7 on Tuesday, 12 May 1987 at 7 pm. The attendance was 14 Members and 11 guests.

Members present were: Revd. G. K. McCULLOCH (*Chairman*), M. A. ADCOCK, P. J. BELMAN, D. R. CALDER, Dr R. A. F. COX, D. GRIFFIN, A. J. KENCH, R. H. KETTLE, Mrs AMBERLEY MOORE, R. G. MORGAN, R. E. F. PEAL, G. ROWE, N. H. F. STONE and A. R. TANNER.

Guests present were: Mrs BERYL ADCOCK, P. J. BULL, Mrs J. B. CALDER, Professor F. COOKE, Dr N. F. DAVIES, Mrs FIONA FARNSWORTH, Mrs NANCY LIDELL, Mrs ISABEL McCULLOCH, Miss MARILYN MacDONALD, P. J. MOORE and Mrs ELIZABETH PEAL.

Professor F. Cooke gave an address on "Birds of the Arctic", which was followed by a discussion of much interest. An abstract of his address will be published in a future issue of the *Bulletin*.

## New evidence for sympatry in the sibling species *Caprimulgus atripennis* Jerdon and *C. macrurus* Horsfield

by S. Dillon Ripley and Bruce M. Beehler

Received 17 June 1986

In his revision of the subspecies of the South Asian nightjar, *Caprimulgus macrurus* Horsfield, Mees (1977) found that the anomalous southern Indian population *atripennis* Jerdon appeared to overlap geographically with that of the northern Indian population *albonotatus* Tickell without noticeable intergradation. The subsequent appearance of new information on the biology of the 2 populations, supplied in part by Marshall (1978), influenced Mees (1985) to reconsider his original decision and to give *atripennis* full species status. In arguing for this, Mees supported his belief with data on size, apparent geographic overlap, voice and egg colouration.

The weakest aspect of Mees's data related to geographic distributions, because of the paucity of specimen records from the region of the Eastern Ghats, where both birds have been collected (see Mees 1977: 17, Fig. 2). In no instance were both forms collected from the same locality, and there was some concern that the seasonal movement of individuals might confound the determination of breeding distributions.

In a recent series of expeditions to the Eastern Ghats of Andhra Pradesh (cf. Ripley & Beehler 1985, Ripley *et al.* in press) we obtained a single specimen each of *albonotatus* and *atripennis* at 800 m a.s.l. from Wangasara, Chintapalli Taluk, Visakhapatnam District (17°54'N, 82°25'E). Both were males in breeding condition, and were collected within a kilometre of each other in the disturbed habitat of a large coffee estate. Both were taken in early March 1985. The *albonotatus* specimen was collected on 8 March 1985, and that of *atripennis* on 6 March 1985. During this period, nightjars were vocal and active. We heard a variety of calling birds that we believed were the species *macrurus*, and at least 2 members of the field party opined that we were hearing 2 "types" of calls; but we made no attempt to associate particular calls with specific individuals nor did we make sound recordings. At that time we

were unaware of any systematic question regarding peninsular Indian populations of *Caprimulgus macrurus*.

A comparison of the 2 Wangasara specimens supports Mees's notion that there is no intergradation between the 2 forms. Our 2 specimens offer clear contrasts (Table 1):

TABLE 1

Mensural data of 2 recent specimens of *Caprimulgus* from Andhra Pradesh

	Wing	Tail	Weight	USNM No
<i>albonotatus</i>	198	164	79	585255
<i>atripennis</i>	181	125	55	585256

In addition, the 2 specimens exhibited the following plumage differences (in all cases *albonotatus* is listed first): (a) *crown pattern*: heavily streaked with slim, lanceolate, black stripes *vs* lightly streaked with teardrop-shaped black blotches; (b) *background colouration of crown*: heavily variegated with fine black specks *vs* nearly uniformly powdery-tan; (c) *collar of hind-crown*: yellowish-tan with abundant fine black transverse bars *vs* medium brown with no fine black barring; (d) *breast-band posterior to the white throat patch*: yellowish-buff with profuse, fine black barring *vs* uniformly grey-buff without fine black barring.

We agree with Mees's (1985) assessment that *atripennis* should be considered specifically distinct from *macrurus*. The 2 appear to be sibling species, *atripennis* being the south Indian humid forest "vicariant" of the widespread *macrurus* superspecies.

In his 1977 paper, Mees considered *aequabilis* Ripley a synonym of *atripennis*. After a comparison of new material of typical *atripennis* (USNM 585256, 585466) from Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu with the holotype and 2 other specimens (USNM 263711, 248426) of *aequabilis* from Ceylon, we believe that the latter should stand as a distinct, though finely differentiated subspecies, as originally designated by Ripley (1945). The Singhalese form differs in being darker overall, but most clearly on the upperparts. This is especially noticeable on the mid-back and in the background colouration of the crown. The hind-collar of *atripennis* is richer brown and plain, whereas in *aequabilis* it is duller, narrower and broken by fine black streaks. The breast band in *atripennis* is plain, with minimal streaking or variegation; in *aequabilis* the band is greyer and marked by fine but definite black patterning. There is no difference in wing spotting between the two. Since the noticeably darker and greyer material from Ceylon is also the older material, we find unconvincing Mees' argument (1977: 13) that the apparent cited differences are "to some extent due to fading". Our findings agree well with those of Whistler (1944: 234), who examined series of both populations.

Thus the newly recognized species *atripennis* comprises both the populations from the Eastern and Western Ghats of peninsular India (the nominate form) and that of Ceylon (*aequabilis*).

*Acknowledgements*: We are grateful to the Department of Forests, Andhra Pradesh, for permission to conduct field research in their state. K. S. R. Krishna Raju kindly provided logistic support for our field efforts. Field research was funded by the Smithsonian Foreign Currency Program, administered by F. C. Berkowitz.

References:

Marshall, J. T. 1978. Systematics of smaller Asian night birds based on voice. *Orn. Monogr.* 25: 1-58.

- Mees, G. F. 1977. Geographical variation of *Caprimulgus macrurus* Horsfield (Aves, Caprimulgidae). *Zool. Verb.* 155: 47.
- 1985. *Caprimulgus macrurus* Horsfield and related forms, a re-evaluation (Aves, Caprimulgidae). *Proc. Konin. Nederl. Akad. Wetensch. Ser. C*, 88: 419–428.
- Ripley, S. D. 1945. A new race of nightjar from Ceylon. *Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.* 65: 40–41.
- Ripley, S. D. & Beehler, B. M. 1985. A new subspecies of the babbler *Malacocincla abbotti* from the Eastern Ghats, India. *Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.* 105: 66–67.
- Ripley, S. D., Beehler, B. M. & Krishna Raju, K. S. R. In Press. Birds of the Visakhapatnam Ghats. *J. Bomb. Nat. Hist. Soc.*
- Whistler, H. 1944. The avifaunal survey of Ceylon conducted jointly by the British and Colombo museums. *Spolia Zeyl.* 23: 119–321.

Address: Drs S. D. Ripley and B. M. Beehler, NHB Room 336, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC 20560, USA.

© British Ornithologists' Club 1987

## Non-conspecificity of *Cossypha insulana* Grote and *Cossypha bocagei* Finsch & Hartlaub, with the description of a new subspecies of *Cossypha bocagei* from western Tanzania

by Alexandre Prigogine

Received 18 June 1986

Moreau & Benson (1956) arrived at the conclusion, based on characters, plumage and dimensions, that the robin-chats *Cossypha insulana* Grote and *C. bocagei* Finsch & Hartlaub are conspecific. This opinion has been accepted by most taxonomists, in particular by Chapin (*in* Moreau & Benson), White (1962), Hall & Moreau (1970) and Morony, Bock & Farrand (1975). Wolters (1980) however considers these birds belong to 2 distinct species of the genus *Sheppardia*. More recently, Wolters (1983) proposed a new genus for them, *Prosheppardia*, characterized by a white patch (often concealed) on the lore or a reduced superciliary stripe. *C. insulana* has a relatively large bill and the two species, *bocagei* and *insulana*, have relatively strong legs. The tail is short in *insulana*, as in *Orocossypha*, another new genus proposed by Wolters (1983).

Starting from the north, nominate *C. insulana* Grote (1935) is limited to Fernando Po. If, in conformity with Wolters (1983), the genus *Sheppardia* is used, *Sheppardia poensis* Alexander, 1903, is valid. The Cameroon montane forest is inhabited by *granti* Serle (1949); *schoutedeni* Prigogine (1952) was described from the region of Lutunguru, but another population of the same race was found later in the Itombwe Highland (Prigogine 1971) and there exists a specimen collected on the western slope of Ruwenzori (IRSNB); the form *kaboboensis* lives on Mt. Kabobo (Prigogine 1955); *kungwensis* Moreau (1941) exists on Kungwe-Mahari.

Nominate *bocagei* was described from Angola (Finsch & Hartlaub 1870). Benson (1955) separated the race *chapini* for northern Zambia, while Prigogine (1969) limited *hallae* to southern Zaïre.

Hall & Moreau (1970) mapped together "short-tailed" and "long-tailed" *Cossypha bocagei*. The locality indicated (map 152) just south of